

The Townsend House
(The Cosmos Club)
2121 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C.

HABS No. DC-273

HABS
WASH,
215 -

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
THE TOWNSEND HOUSE
(THE COSMOS CLUB)

HABS No. DC-273

WASH, 215 -

Location: 2121 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C.,
on the northeast corner of Massachusetts and
Florida Avenues. UTM: 18.322285 .4308740

Present Owner: Cosmos Club

Present Occupant: Cosmos Club

Present Use: Private Club

Statement of
Significance: This detached residence is a good example of Louis XV
exterior detailing. As reputedly stipulated by the
Townsend, the present building incorporates parts of
an earlier home [apparently only a portion of a basement
wall]. The lot, nearly an acre in extent, occupies a
dominant corner site defined by the intersection of Q
Street, Massachusetts, and Florida Avenues. Olmsted Asso-
ciates may have designed the landscaping for the site.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Lot and Square:

The building is located in Square 66, lot 71 (formerly lots 14 and 15). Lots 41 and 42 in Square 66 are also included in the property.

B. Original and Subsequent Owners:

The following chain of title to the property shows the owners of the present structure and of any known preceding structures on the site:

1871 Deed June 14, 1871, recorded June 15, 1871 in
Liber 649 folio 415

August Miller et ux
To
Curtis J. Hillyer

". . . for and in consideration of the sum of Twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) . . . to them in hand paid by the said party of the second part . . . All of Square . . . (66) as laid out and recorded on the original plan of said city . . ."

1892 Deed March 4, 1892, recorded March 7, 1892 in
Liber 1660 folio 367

Curtis J. Hillyer et ux, Angeline
To
Edward J. Stellwagen

"Lot...(14) and part of lot...(15) of Curtis J. Hillyer's recorded subdivision of Square...(66) said part of lot...(15) being contained within the following metes and bounds viz.: Beginning for the same at the south east corner of said lot, running thence North westerly on and with the North line of Massachusetts Avenue...178.25 feet; thence North easterly at right angles to said North line of Massachusetts Avenue...137.07 feet to the south line of a public alley; thence south easterly on and with the south line of said public alley,...69.28 feet; thence East 61.9 feet to the West line of a public alley; thence south 53.4 feet to the line of lot...(14); thence West 10.95 feet; thence south westerly 14.65 feet; and thence south on and with the dividing line between lots...(14) and...(15) to the line of Massachusetts Avenue the place of beginning..."

(This is a description of lot 14 and the eastern part of lot 15.)

1892 Deed July 8, 1892, recorded July 14, 1892 in
Liber 1715 folio 93

Edward J. Stellwagen, Trustee
To
Angeline Hillyer

"This Indenture...by and between Edward J. Stellwagen Trustee under certain deed in trust recorded in Liber 1660 folio 367... party of the first part and Angeline Hillyer of the District of Columbia party of the second part...conveyed...Lot...(14) and [eastern] part of Lot...(15) of Curtis J. Hillyer's subdivision of Square...(66) said part of Lot...(15) being described by metes and bounds as follows..." (Refer to liber 1660 folio 367 as recorded above.)

1898 Deed December 5, 1898, recorded December 22, 1898 in
Liber 2342 folio 445

Curtis J. Hillyer et ux, Angeline
To
Mary Scott Townsend

"This Deed...Witnesseeth, that Curtis J. Hillyer and Angeline Hillyer, his wife, the said Angeline Hillyer acting herein also in her own right, of the District of Columbia, parties hereto of the first part, for and in consideration of Ten dollars in current money...to them paid by Mary Scott Townsend of the said District of Columbia, party hereto of the second part...do hereby...convey the following described land and premises, with the improvements thereon and the easements and appurtenances thereunto belonging, situate and lying in the City of Washington...All of lot... (14) in said Curtis J. Hillyer's subdivision of Square... (66), as said subdivision and the plat thereof are recorded in Liber No. 12 folio 55 of the Records of the Office of the Surveyor of said District. Also all that part of Lot...(15) in said subdivision of said square contained within the following metes and bounds, namely: Beginning for the same on the North line of Massachusetts Avenue, at the South eastern corner of said Lot...(15), and running thence North westerly along with said North line of said Avenue,...278.25 feet, more or less, to the South eastern corner of that part of said lot...(15) [which was] conveyed by said parties hereto of the first part by Deed bearing date June 7, 1894 and recorded in Liber No. 1931 folio 81 to Laura F. McCartney and by her husband, conveyed to John G. Moore, by Deed bearing date June 7, 1897 and recorded in Liber No. 2240 folio 6 of said Land Records; thence North easterly along and with the East line of said part of said lot...137.07 feet, more or less, to a public alley; thence south easterly along and with the South line of said alley...170.0 feet...to a point ...61.9 feet West of the West line of a ...24 feet wide alley; thence East 61.9 feet more or less to the Western line of said last named alley; thence south easterly following said ...alley...23.4 feet; thence South...30.01 feet; thence West 10.95 feet; thence south westerly...14.65 feet intersecting a straight line drawn due North of the point beginning, at a distance of...104.8 feet from said point of beginning; and thence South...104.8 feet, to the point of beginning...being all of said Lot...(15) excepting the part thereof conveyed as aforesaid to McCartney, and by said McCartney conveyed to said Moore. Subject nevertheless, to five Deeds of Trust on parts of said subdivided Lot...(15), recorded respectively in Liber No. 2273, folio 331 et seq.; Liber No. 1778, folio 156 et seq.; Liber No. 2188, folio 256 et seq.; Liber No. 2188, folio 264 et seq.; and Liber No. 2188, folio 269 et seq. of the aforesaid Land Records, securing payment of incumbrances aggregating Sixty-five thousand, five hundred dollars (\$65,500) which the said Mary Scott Townsend assumes to pay as part of the consideration for this conveyance..."

(This is a description of lot 14 and the eastern and middle parts of lot 15.)

1894 Deed June 7, 1894, recorded June 11, 1894 in
Liber 1931 folio 81

Curtis J. Hillyer et ux, Angeline
To
Laura F. McCartney,
wife of John W.

"...for and in consideration of Thirteen Thousand six hundred and eleven and 50/100 dollars (\$13,611.50)...to them in hand paid...have...conveyed...the following described land and premises...distinguished as part of lot...(15) in C. J. Hillyer's subdivision of Square...(66) beginning for the same at the south west corner of said lot and square being also the intersection of the north line of Massachusetts Avenue with the east line of Boundary Street now Florida Avenue; thence south easterly at right angles to the north line of Massachusetts Avenue...55.33 feet; thence north easterly at right angles to the north line of Massachusetts Avenue...137.07 feet to the south line of a public alley; thence north westerly with said south line of said public alley to the east line of Boundary Street...and thence with the east line of said street to the north line of Massachusetts Avenue the place of beginning, containing 3889 square feet of land, more or less. Subject however, to a certain Deed of Trust dated January 10, 1893 recorded in Liber No. 1778, folio 139 securing a note of...Six thousand dollars (\$6,000), which said note is included in and forms part of the consideration hereinbefore named in this Deed..."

(This is a description of the western part of lot 15.)

1897 Deed June 7, 1897, recorded June 28, 1897 in
Liber 2240 folio 6

Laura F. McCartney et vir
To
John G. Moore

"...John G. Moore, of the City and State of New York, party of the second part...Part of lot...(15) in C. J. Hillyer's subdivision of Square...(66)..." (See Liber 1931, folio 81 as recorded above.)

1898 Deed November 24, 1898, recorded December 12, 1898 in
Liber 2354 folio 295

John G. Moore et ux, Louisa
To
Elverton R. Chapman

Western part of lot 15 in Square 66.

1898 Deed December 10, 1898, recorded December 12, 1898 in
Liber 2354 folio 300

Elverton R. Chapman (unmarried)
To
Mary Scott Townsend

"This Deed...witnesseth that Elverton R. Chapman (unmarried) of New York City, State of New York party hereto of the first part, for and in consideration of Fifteen thousand, five hundred fifty-six dollars (\$15,556)...to him paid by Mary Scott Townsend of the District of Columbia party hereto of the second part...conveyed...Part of Lot...(15) in C. J. Hillyer's subdivision of Square...(66) as per plat recorded in Liber 12, folio 55 of the Records of the Office of the Surveyor of the District of Columbia contained within the following metes and bounds..." (Refer to Liber No. 1931, folio 81 as recorded above.)

NOTE: The Will of Mary Scott Townsend was recorded in Will Book No. 169, folio 534 and admitted to probate April 14, 1931.

Mary Scott Townsend leaves all property to her daughter, Mathilde Townsend Welles.

The Will of Mathilde Townsend Welles was recorded in Will Book No. 396, folio 138 and admitted to probate November 2, 1949.

1950 Deed January 12, 1950, recorded March 8, 1950 in
Liber 9157, folio 552

Sumner Welles,
Bruce Baird and
National Savings and Trust Co.
Trustees
To
Cosmos Club

"This Deed...by and between Sumner Welles, Bruce Baird and National Savings and Trust Company, Trustees under the last Will and Testament of Mathilde Townsend Welles, acting herein in exercise of the power conferred by said Will, parties hereto

of the first part; and Cosmos Club, a body corporate, duly incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia, party of the second part...for and in consideration of the sum of Three hundred and sixty-four thousand, six hundred and thirty-five dollars (\$364,635)...Lots...(14) and...(15), and...(41) and...(42) in C. J. Hillyer's subdivision of Square ...(66) as per plat recorded in Liber 12, folio 55 of the Records of the Office of the Surveyor of the District of Columbia..."

Lot 41 and lot 42 adjoin lot 15 at the northeast.

Source: Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

C. Date of Erection:

The house was begun early in 1899 and completed by 1901.

D. Building Permits:

The applications for the following building permits were filed by the architect, contractor or owner's agent and provide significant data:

Permits missing from the files of the D.C. Government:

No. 920, December 22, 1898
No. 1582, May 9, 1899
No. 105, July 15, 1904
No. 364, July 20, 1909
No. 662, August 8, 1912
No. 799, August 16, 1912

Permits found:

No. A 23589, August 31, 1951
Permit to Excavate

No. A 23784, September 7, 1951
Permit to raze stable at rear

No. A 27522, January 31, 1952
Permit to build addition

Owner: Cosmos Club

Architect: Horace W. Peaslee

Estimated cost: \$225,000.

"Build one brick and concrete addition to private club as per plans (\$100,000). Also relocations of partitions for bedrooms, and baths, new kitchens. Facilities, general

miscellaneous repairs. Remove upper story of stable (\$125,000)."

No. A 28448, March 7, 1952
Permit to Install Passenger Elevator
Owner: Cosmos Club
Mechanic: Haughton Elevator
Estimated cost: \$16,000
Location: center of building

No. A 28457, March 7, 1952
Permit to Install Freight Elevator
Owner: Cosmos Club
Estimated cost: \$16,000
Location: rear of building

No. A 46398, August 12, 1953
Permits for Repairs, Alterations, etc.
Owner: Cosmos Club
Architect: Julian E. Berla
Estimated cost: \$500
"Rearrange exterior stairway from east parking lot to basement, and provide an entrance to coat room through the barber shop."

Source: Record Group 351, Records of the District of Columbia, Building Permits 1877-1949, the Legislative and Natural Resources Branch, Civil Div., National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.

E. Alterations and Additions:

A 19'-0" by 24'-0", second-story, tin-roofed north addition was made to the house in 1904 by the architects, Carrère and Hastings. Some modifications occurred in the building after 1915 as revealed in a comparison of the present interiors with photographs taken in that year. (See Frances Benjamin Johnston photographs.) These changes include: the replacement or removal of the detailing in the first-floor [second-floor] reception and anterooms, and the replacement of the library mantel. [See Part II.] Where [FBJ Coll.] or [See FBJ Coll.] occur, refer to Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

In 1942 the stable was converted into a Service Canteen by the installation of kitchens for the American Women's Army Corps in 1943, the house had to be modified in order to provide for the 150 women stationed there. (Refer to plans in the Director's office of the Cosmos Club.) Dormitory rooms were located on the [second] third, and fourth floors. The dining room became the combined mess and recreation hall, while the library was turned into the officers' dining room.

Extensive modifications were made after the purchase of the property by the Cosmos Club in 1950. Seventeen architect members of the

Cosmos Club formed a group called "The Associated Club Architects." A contract dated May 10, 1950 provided for a design competition to be held in two stages with a winner to be selected within 60 days. (Cosmos Club Bulletin, Vol. 3, No. 8, June 1950, pages 2-3) Horace Peaslee was awarded the contract to convert the building for club use.

Peaslee's changes included a new roof, plumbing, wiring, heating, rearrangements of the interior, a modernized kitchen, an enlarged dining room and an auditorium - all for an estimated \$390,000. Because of building code requirements, the doorways between the reception room and the ballroom were closed; and the open central stair was closed off from surrounding rooms. In addition, the building was subdivided into fire blocks. (Cosmos Club Bulletin, Vol. II, No. 7, July - August 1958, page 6)

In 1952, a five story north addition (with three third-floor dining rooms and an enlarged Members' Dining Room) was opened. (Cosmos Club Bulletin, Vol. 15, Nos. 6-7, June - July 1952, page 8) At the time, a west entrance was provided for access to the Ladies Dining Room in the new wing. Eight columns in the Byzantine manner (which had earlier supported arches in a garden pavilion) and an Italianate fountain (which had earlier been set in the garden wall of the coach house) formed the major architectural framework of the new facility. Many parts of the original building were offered for sale after the remodeling was completed. These included marble mouldings, electric fixtures, oak-panelled doors, and ironwork, a list of which is found in the Cosmos Club Bulletin of May 1953.

In 1958 funds were voted to restore murals on the first [second] floor. Henri Courtais of New York was the restoration artist. (The Washington Post, 4-2-58; photo shows artist and mural.)

The 1960 remodeling for an estimated \$408,000 included the following changes:

- Basement: modernization of the kitchen areas, including an expanded dining room and lounge for the staff.
- Grd. fl.: changing the board room and offices into a taproom.
- 1st fl.: enlargement of original dining room by addition of space for three private rooms convertible into one room.
- 2nd fl.: six convertible dining rooms and a new board room.

The Cosmos Club purchased land at 2168 Florida Avenue and at No. 5 Hillyer Court to provide room for the east extension designed by the architect, Frank W. Cole, and completed in May 1962 by the contractor, George Lipscomb and Co.. Further remodeling in 1971 included alterations to the ground floor service area.

F. Architects: Carrère and Hastings, New York City.

John Mervyn Carrère (November 9, 1858 - March 1, 1911), the son of John M. Carrère a coffee plantation owner and resident of Baltimore, was born in Rio de Janeiro. His mother, Anna Louisa Maxwell, was also of Baltimore. As a youth, Carrère studied at the Institute Breitenstein at Grenchen, Switzerland. While attending the École des Beaux-Arts, he studied under Leon Ginain and graduated with the Diplôme d' Architecte in 1882. In 1883 Carrère joined the firm of McKim, Mead and White. Shortly thereafter, he formed a partnership with Thomas Hastings. His marriage in 1886 was to the former Marian Sidonia Dell of Houston and San Francisco.

Carrère was the chief architect and chairman of the architectural board for the gardens, decorations and grounds of the 1901 Pan American Exposition in Buffalo. He helped found the Fine Arts Federation, the Municipal Art Commission of New York City, and the Society of Beaux-Arts Architecture, of which he was twice president. He was also twice president of the American Institute of Architects and a trustee of the American Academy at Rome. Carrère worked on the city commissions of: Grand Rapids, Michigan (1909), Hartford Connecticut (1911), and Cleveland, Ohio.

His book City Improvement from the Artistic Standpoint (1908) was highly influential. The architect's death in 1911 was the result of a collision between his taxi cab and a street car.

A few of the more important buildings designed by the firm include:

Ponce de Leon Hotel, St. Augustine, Florida (1887)
Alcazar Hotel, St. Augustine, Florida (1888)
Grace Methodist Church, St. Augustine, Florida (1887)
Presbyterian Church, St. Augustine, Florida (1890)
Central Congregational Church, Providence, Rhode Island (1891)
Hotel Laurel-in-the-Pines, Lakewood, New Jersey (1891)
Benedict estate, Greenwich, Connecticut (1891)
Jefferson Hotel, Richmond, Virginia (1893)
"Bellafontaine" (Giraud Foster residence;), Lenox, Mass. (1897)
Ganbrill estate, Newport, Rhode Island (1898)
"Blairsden" (Blair estate), Peapack, New Jersey (1898)
Richmond Borough Hall, New York City (1903-07)
McKinley Monument, Buffalo, New York (1903)
Approaches and architectural work of Manhattan Bridge, New York City (1905)
Royal Bank of Canada, Montreal (1906)
"Whitehall" (Flagler residence), Palm Beach, Florida (1901)
Guggenheim residence, Elberton, New Jersey (1903)
First Church of Christ Scientist, New York City (1898)
Carnegie Institute, Washington, D.C. (1906)
Goldwin Smith Hall at Cornell University (1903)
Woolsey Hall and Memorial Hall at Yale (1906)
Senate and House Office Buildings, Washington, D.C. (1905-06)

New (Century) Theatre, New York City (1906-09)
New York Public Library, (1897, completed 1911)
Portland City Hall, Maine (1911)

Sources: Dumas Malone (ed.), Dictionary of American Biography,
Vol. III, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

A. I. A. Quarterly Bulletin, April - June, 1911.

The New York Times, 3-2-11, 9:3 (obituary).

Thomas Hastings (March 11, 1860 - October 22, 1929), the son of Thomas Samuel Hastings, pastor of the West Presbyterian Church, and of Fanny de Groot, was born in New York City. Hastings left Columbia University to study under Jules André at the École des Beaux-Arts where he received his Diplôme d' Architecte in 1884. While in Paris he met Carrère. Later he returned to New York and joined the firm of McKim, Mead and White. In 1900 Hastings married the former Helen R. Benedict, daughter of Commodore E. C. Benedict of Greenwich, Connecticut.

Hastings, as a partner in the firm of Carrère and Hastings, helped formulate the Hartford city plan; worked on Mt. Vernon Square in Baltimore; and designed the industrial town of Duluth, Minnesota for United States Steel. The Pulitzer fountain and Plaza Hotel in New York City were equally noted works. His projects in England (including Devonshire House apartments in London) resulted in the award of the Royal Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1922 and the distinction of chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

From 1910 to 1917 Hastings was a member of the Commission of Fine Arts in Washington, D.C. - during which time he was co-author of Six Lectures of Architecture, published in 1917. The architect's death in 1929 resulted from an appendicitis attack.

Some of the more important projects produced after the death of John Carrère include:

Tower of Jewels, Panama Pacific Exposition, San Francisco
(1914)

Richmond County Court House, Staten Island, New York

Frick residence, Fifth Avenue, New York City

Knoedler Galleries, Fifth Avenue, New York City

Alexander Building, Fifth Avenue, New York City

St. Ambrose Chapel, Cathedral of St. John the Divine,
New York City

Memorial Amphitheatre, Arlington Cemetery, Virginia

Princeton Battle Monument, Princeton, New Jersey

Lafayette monument base, court of the Louvre, Paris

Altar of Liberty and Victory Arch, Madison Square, New York
City (temporary, 1919)

Standard Oil Company, Broadway, New York City

Sources: Dumas Malone (ed.), Dictionary of American Biography,
Vol. VIII, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

The Architectural Forum, Vol. LI, No. 6 (December 1929),
page 35.

The New York Times, 10-23-29, 29:1 (obituary).

G. Known Plans, Drawings, Elevations, etc.:

Plans of building as it was in 1950 and a large selection of subsequent plans showing additions and alterations. Also a set of plans stamped "Preliminary", which are unsigned and undated (see reproductions). Files of the Cosmos Club.

Ground and main floor plans.

The Architectural Record, Vol. X, No. 4 (April 1901).
(see reproductions)

H. Important Old Views:

1. Cosmos Club's photograph album

Exterior views:

- a. South facade
- b. Entrance drive and building from the east (see reproduction)
- c. Entrance drive and building from the west
- d. Entrance driveway
- e. Along south wall from the west
- f. View from across Massachusetts Avenue
- g. Same (exterior views indicate photographs taken before 1905)
- h. Detail of entrance door from sidewalk
- i. Garden, corner of Florida and Massachusetts Avenues
- j. Florida Avenue carriage house

2. Frances Benjamin Johnston photographs, ca. 1915; Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Lot 2427 [FBJ Coll.]

Exterior views:

- a. Nearly direct view of entrance facade
- b. View from southwest of entrance facade
- c. Detail of entrance including marquise

Interior views:

- a. Entrance hall, northeast corner
- b. Entrance hall, northwest corner
- c. Reception hall, fireplace wall

- d. Dining room, west bay
- e. Ballroom, north musicians' alcove
- f. Ballroom, looking north
- g. Library, southwest corner
- h. Library, northwest corner
- i. Library, fireplace and wall (see reproduction)
- j. Reception room, northwest corner
- k. Reception room, fireplace and wall
- l. Anteroom, fireplace and wall
- m. Dining room, fireplace and wall
- n. East reception room, ground floor

3. Percy C. Stuart, "Recent Domestic Architecture in Washington, D.C., Residence of Mrs. R. H. Townsend," The Architectural Record, Vol. X, No. 4 (April 1901), pages 425-437.

- a. Exterior looking north
- b. Entrance hall looking northeast
- c. Main stair, entrance hall from west
- d. Entrance hall, looking west from main stair
- e. Dining room looking south
- f. Reception hall looking southeast
- g. Ballroom looking northeast
- h. First-[second] floor reception room looking northeast
- i. Library looking northeast

4. Newspaper photographs

Exterior views:

- a. View of stables, The Washington Daily News, 1-16-42.
- b. Facade, The Washington Star Pictorial Magazine, 11-23-52.
- c. Facade, The Washington Post, 1-23-56.

Interior views:

- a. Interior of stables, The Washington Daily News, 1-16-42.
- b. Library mantle, The Washington Post, 1-12-50.
- c. Ballroom, The Washington Post, 1-12-50.
- d. Ballroom (refurbished), The Evening Star, 8-19-52.
- e. Dolly Madison Room, reception hall, anteroom, library, auditorium, and ladies dining room, The Washington Star Pictorial Magazine, 11-23-52.
- f. Lounge, The Washington Post, 1-23-56.

I. Residents:

- 1. City and telephone directories list the following tenants:

1876-1899 Curtis J. Hillyer

1900 Vacant
1901-1902 Richard H. Townsend
1903-1913 Mathilde and Mary S. Townsend
1914-1931 Mary S. Townsend
1932 Vacant
1933-1939 Sumner B. Welles
1940-1942 Vacant
1943 Sumner Welles
1944-1949 No listing found
1950-1972 Cosmos Club

2. The Cosmos Club lists among its most prominent members:

Presidents of the United States

William Howard Taft
Herbert Hoover
Woodrow Wilson

Nobel Prize Winners

A. A. Michelson	Physics	1907
Woodrow Wilson	Peace	1919
Robert A. Millikan	Physics	1923
Arthur H. Compton	Physics	1927
Sinclair Lewis	Literature	1930
Harold Urey	Chemistry	1934
I. I. Rabi	Physics	1944
Lord John Boyd Orr	Physics	1949
Edwin M. McMillan	Chemistry	1951
Glenn T. Seaborg	Chemistry	1951
Vincent DuVigneaud	Chemistry	1955
Juan Ramon Jimenez	Literature	1956
George W. Beadle	Medicine & Physiology	1958
Willard F. Libby	Chemistry	1960
R. S. Mulliken	Chemistry	1956
Robert Hofstadter	Physics	1961
Melvin Calvin	Chemistry	1961
Charles H. Townes	Physics	1964
Eugene P. Wigner	Physics	1963
William Shockley	Physics	1956
Edward M. Purcell	Physics	1952

Pulitzer Prize Winners

Henry Adams	Biography	1919
Charles Warren	History	1923
James Truslow Adams	History	1923
William Allen White	Editorial Writing & Biography	1923
Jay N. Darling	Cartoon	1924, 1943

Michael I. Pupin	Biography	1924
Edward Channing	History	1911
Sinclair Lewis	Letters	1926 (refused)
Samuel F. Bemis	History & Biography	1927 1950
Bernadotte E. Schmitt	History	1931
Archibald MacLeish	Poetry & Drama	1933, 1953 1959
Tyler Dennett	Biography	1934
Felix Morley	Editorial Writing	1936
Ralph Barton Perry	Biography	1936
Thomas L. Stokes	Local Reporting	1959
Ray Stannard Baker	Biography	1940
Carlos Romulo	Foreign Corres- pondent	1942
Stephen Bonsal	History	1945
Leo Sowerby	Music	1946
Herbert Elliston	Editorial Writing	1949
Roy Franklin Nichols	History	1949
Herbert L. Block	Cartoon	1942, 1954
Bruce Catton	History	1954
Walter Lippman	Special Citation	1958
Allen Drury	Letters	1960
Arthur Walworth	Biography	1958
Merlo J. Pussey	Biography	1952
J. A. Livingston	Journalism	1965
Herman Wouk	Fiction	1951
William J. White	Biography	1955

3. Biographies of the residents:

Richard H. Townsend (1850-1902) was born in Philadelphia. Around 1892, after his retirement as President of the Erie and Pittsburgh Railroad, he moved to Washington. As stated in The Washington Post, January 11, 1950, Townsend and his wife, the former Mary Scott, commissioned the firm of Carrère and Hastings to rebuild the Hillyer mansion "in the style of the Petit Trianon." Shortly after the house was completed, Townsend fell from a horse, fracturing his skull, and died November 27, 1902. (The Evening Star, 11-28-02)

Mary Scott Townsend (died March 1931), wife of Richard H., was the daughter of Colonel William L. Scott and the former Mary Matilda Tracy, who lived at 22 Jackson Place, N.W., on Lafayette Square, Washington, D.C.. Colonel Scott was a member of Congress (1884-1888) and a railroad and coal executive.

Because of the belief in a story told in childhood that she would encounter evil if she were to live in a totally new house. Mrs. Townsend stipulated that the Hillyer residence [apparently only a portion of one of the basement walls] (see

photograph) be incorporated into a new structure. ("In Haunted Washington" by Rene Bache) It was at her father's home that Mrs. Townsend began corresponding with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., about the design of the gardens around her new residence on Massachusetts Avenue. (Olmsted Associates Papers, Job # 296, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress: letter dated 6-18-00)

After her husband's death in 1902, Mrs. Townsend remained at 2121 Massachusetts Avenue, where she is said to have spent as much as \$240,000 a year for lavish entertainment, including food, payroll for 34 servants and their uniforms, and heat and electricity. (Times-Herald, 8-30-49)

Sources: Dumas Malone (ed.), "William L. Scott", Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. III, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

Olmsted Associates - Papers, Job # 296, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, letter dated 6-18-00.

"In Haunted Washington", Rene Bache. Clipping in binder: "Historic Houses - General Articles", Washingtoniana Room, Martin Luther King Library.

Times-Herald, 8-30-49, 12:1.

Mathilde Townsend (died 1949), daughter of Richard and Mary Townsend, was said to be the richest girl in Washington. Her marriage in 1910 to Senator Peter Goelet Gerry of Rhode Island ended in divorce in 1925. That same year she married Sumner B. Welles, who later was to become the Under Secretary of State for Franklin D. Roosevelt. Mrs. Welles died while vacationing in Switzerland, and shortly thereafter her husband offered the Massachusetts Avenue house for sale.

Source: Times-Herald, 8-30-49, 12:1.

Sumner Benjamin Welles (October 14, 1892 - September 24, 1961) was born in New York City. After he was graduated from Harvard in 1914, he entered the State Department where in 1920 he became Assistant Chief of the Division of Latin American Affairs. In 1933 he served as Ambassador to Cuba, returning that December to his new appointment as Assistant Secretary of State under Cordell Hull. The following May he became Under Secretary of State. Welles kept the Government well-informed during the 1938 Munich crisis and during his fact finding tour of Rome, the Vatican, Berlin, Paris, and London in 1940. In 1941, he "accompanied President Roosevelt to the historic meeting with

Sir Winston Churchill aboard the battleship Prince of Wales off Newfoundland, that resulted in the Atlantic Charter" (The New York Times, 9-25-61). Due to friction with Cordell Hull, Welles resigned his position in 1943.

Welles is remembered as an architect of the Roosevelt Administration's Good Neighbor Policy with Latin America - also, "as chairman of a State Department committee formed during World War II to outline post war international cooperation plans. Mr. Welles drafted proposals later used in modified form as the basis of the United Nations." (The New York Times, 9-25-61)

His marriage in 1915 to Esther Slater produced two sons and ended in divorce in 1923. In 1925, Welles married Mathilde Scott Townsend, the former Mrs. Gerry; and after her death in 1949, he married Mrs. Harriette Post in 1953. During his retirement, Welles divided his time between Oxon Manor in Oxon Hill, Maryland; 1840 24th Street, N.W. Washington; and his summer residence in Bar Harbor, Maine. Harvard University Press has published several of his books, including:

Naboth's Vineyard (1928)
Four Freedoms (1942)
The Time For Decision (1944)
Where Are We Headed (1946)
Seven Decisions that Shaped History (1950)

Sources: Who's Who in The Nation's Capital, 1934-1935,
Washington, D.C.: Ransdell Incorporated, 1935.

The New York Times, 9-25-61, 1:6 (obituary).

The New York Times, 9-26-61, 5:3.

The Cosmos Club was founded by John Wesley Powell, a reknowned explorer and scientist, after a meeting on November 16, 1878 with a number of gentlemen sharing similar interests. The auditorium of the present club was dedicated and named in his honor. The Club membership includes distinguished men in the fields of science, literature, and the fine arts.

The club was first located in rented rooms of the Old Corcoran building on 15th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. (now demolished). The Club leased the house at 23 Madison Place in December 1882; purchased the Dolley Madison House (number 27) on June 1, 1886 for \$40,000; and then bought number 25 Madison Place in 1907. Number 25 and the adjacent house (number 23) were demolished, and in 1909-1910 the new building was added in their place. In 1917 further expansion resulted from the purchase of the Benjamin Ogle Tayloe house (now 25 Madison Place). An act of Congress approved March 31, 1930 gave authority to the

Secretary of the Treasury to acquire all private property on Madison Place. In 1940 the Federal Government finally made the purchase after an offer of \$1,000,000 was accepted by a full meeting of the Club on March 27, 1940. The buildings were then rented by the Cosmos Club for twelve years, during which time it sought to buy suitable quarters. Property on H Street between 17th and 18th Street, N.W. was subsequently acquired, but problems in obtaining materials in the immediate post war period resulted in inaction.

Finally, in September 1950, the Club bought the Townsend House, which appropriately had been designed by John M. Carrere, a member of the Club from 1905 until his death in 1911. The initial remodeling and subsequent alterations were also carried on by some members of the Club. Horace W. Peaslee, a member from 1926 until his death in 1959, was the architect and Charles H. Tomkins, a member from 1926 until his death in 1956, was the contractor for the 1951 work on the building. The 1961 and 1962 enlargements were handled by architect Frank E. Cole, who joined the Club in 1958, and builder George W. Lipscomb, who joined in 1942.

Source: Paul H. Oehser, "The Cosmos Club of Washington: A Brief History", Records of the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D.C., 1960-1962, pp. 250-265.

J. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

As with similar large homes along Massachusetts Avenue, the Townsend residence has known various functions. During the first few weeks of 1933, Mr. and Mrs. Welles acted as hosts to Franklin D. Roosevelt before he entered the White House. In 1941, after the Welles family moved to Oxon Manor, the mansion was considered for use by the British Mission. (Times-Herald, 2-27-41) This apparently never occurred, but in January 1942 the American Women's Volunteer Service was allowed to use the stables as a canteen. In 1943 the house was occupied by the Canadian Women's Army Corps Headquarters detachment, and the stables were vacated by the A.W.V.S., who were replaced by "British auxiliary territorials."

In late 1949 Sumner Welles indicated that he would be willing to sell the property. His wife, Mathilde, had died in Switzerland, and he no longer wished to retain the house. The Cosmos Club membership authorized the purchase of the building for \$364,635 on January 10, 1950.

Sources: The Cosmos Club Bulletin, Vol. 3, No. 4, February 1950, page 2.

The Evening Star, 1-20-33, 4:2.

The Washington Daily News, 1-18-33, 21:3
The Washington Daily News, 1-16-42, 31:1.
Times-Herald, 2-27-41, E 1:3.
Times-Herald, 8-08-43, 3:3.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This detached building in the mid-18th-century manner has eclectic interior details. [Ground Floor," used by CFA after the British and Continental usage, has been changed by HABS to "Ground or First Floor," to agree with the sequence of floors appearing in the plans.]
2. Condition: The original building is well maintained despite extensive additions and alterations for semipublic use.

B. Exterior Description:

1. Overall dimensions: The three-and-one-half-story-plus-basement structure has flanking two-story wings. The three-bay central pavilion measures 48'-6" on Massachusetts Avenue and 123'-9 1/2" through the dining room to the north wall of the original pantry. The composite bay wings measure 38'-3 1/2" wide, with the east wing 57'-9 1/2" deep and the west wing 62'-8 1/2".
2. Foundations: concrete footings and slab.
3. Wall construction: A granite base to window-sill height supports the limestone walls. The rusticated ground [first] floor is capped by a subsidiary entablature. The frieze is elaborated across the central pavilion; the corona cornice acts as a base for a plinth course, which breaks forward for two-story, fluted, composite pilasters of the central pavilion. Wings have quoins and corner-indented raised panels (capped by masks with swags, drapes, and pendants), flanking central, second-floor windows.
4. Structure: brick bearing walls and steel roofing members.
5. Mechanical: The 1952 Haughton six-passenger elevator has a capacity of 1,000 pounds. The low-pressure steam-heating system is produced by paired, gas-fired, International Boiler furnaces installed in 1952. Nearly 60% of the building is centrally cooled by Carrier Air Conditioning. Lighting is electric.
6. Porches, Marquise, etc.: Flanking the limestone entrance, decorative cast-iron panels and consoles support a glazed convex iron marquise with fleur-de-lis fringe and center escutcheon.

The plinth course is interrupted at the central pavilion openings by decorative cast-iron railings, and at the wings by a limestone, urn-baluster-and-block balcony on concave consoles with drape, pendant, and rosette.

7. Chimneys: Visible from Massachusetts Avenue are four limestone chimneys, two each at the east and west elevations of the central pavilion.

8. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Glazed double entrance doors have cast-iron grilles and a rectangular transom with escutcheon-and-spray grille. The limestone Gibbs surround has pulvinated, bay-leaf architrave with fish-scale keystone; floral spray.

b. Windows: Ground-floor, or first-floor, double-hung, four-light windows have decorative cast-iron grilles. The central pavilion has ovolo limestone sills. Central windows in the wings are capped by swag panels flanked by second-floor balcony consoles (which interrupt the frieze of the subsidiary architrave) and by narrower two-light openings.

The first [second] floor has casement and transom windows with Ionic architraves on a raised ground. The wing bays have plain keystones. The architraves of the central pavilion break upward to encase guilloche panels and are flanked by acanthus consoles, capped by a corona and cyma cornice. The cornice drip moulds curve back toward the wall as the ground for the second-floor [third-floor] windows which have crossette, Ionic architraves flanked at the base by scrolls; interrupted at the head by scrolled keystone and floral swags.

9. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The central pavilion has a frontal, slightly mansardic roof between east and west walls with a limestone capping cornice. A pulvinated copper ridge masks the built-up roofing. The wings each have a slate curb roof, the built-up roofing separated by a pulvinated copper ridge with copper escutcheons at each hip.

b. Cornice, eaves: Interrupted by the second-floor [third-floor] window heads, the entablature architrave and frieze break forward over each pilaster. The composite entablature supports an urn-balustered parapet with raised panel blocks centered over each pilaster. The wings have a cavetto and cyma cornice supporting a panel balustrade pierced by oval guilloche bays.

c. Cupolas, towers, dormers: Central pavilion casement dormers rise above a low attic wall behind the balustrade. Each has a blind fan, a torus architrave with keystone, and a segmental hood flanked by scrolls.

C. Interior Description:

1. Floor plans: The ground-[first]floor vestibule breaks forward into the entrance hall which is the width of the central pavilion. The entrance hall, containing the main stair, is flanked by the southeast reception room (now partitioned for offices), a northeast storage chamber (now additional offices), the southwest reception room (now the ladies' lounge), and the northwest billiard room (now the ladies' entrance hall). At the north the laundry, storage, kitchen, pantry and servants rooms have been greatly altered by additions and remodeling to accommodate present needs. [See original plan.]

The plans indicate the [second-floor] central stair hall was open (now closed) to the rectangular reception hall at the north. The stair and reception hall gave access to the ballroom in the west wing, the library and conservatory (which is now enclosed) in the east wing, the reception and anterooms at the south, and the dining room and pantries at the north. (See original plan.)

The principal bedrooms occupy the [third and fourth] floors, with the major suites to the south and the [fourth-floor] servants' quarters to the north or rear. [See plans.]

2. Spaces: ([Spaces here were illustrated] through photographs taken by Frances Benjamin Johnston prior to 1920. Any comments which indicate changes in the spaces are based on the same collection.)

Entrance hall: (painted white. Opposite the centered vestibule at the south are paired piers and grey-veined, white marble, Ionic columns. The columns and piers serve as a screen which helps to divide the entrance hall into six bays. [FBJ Coll.]

- a. Flooring: grey-veined, white marble squares laid diagonally within a green-veined, black marble border. (A seven-inch high marble stairway platform has been removed.)
- b. Baseboard: 9", stone plinth course with torus cap.
- c. Walls: raised plaster panels in rosette-indented and plain fascia and cavetto mouldings.
- d. Cornice: Carried across the piers on an east and west beam the cornice has a running dog frieze and an egg and dart moulding, both divided into sections by swag and guttae consoles, capped by continuous corona, astragal

and acanthus talon courses. Dividing the space into six bays are two additional beams, not as deep as the cornice described above, having egg and dart, corona, astragal and acanthus courses.

- e. Ceiling: 14'-0" high, plaster painted white.
- f. Doorways and doors: The modern, glazed, double door from the vestibule has a transom and side lights with decorative cast iron grilles. The natural wood, single doors flanking the east and west chimney walls each have a single carved panel capped by a plaster frieze, a cyma cornice and a decorative urn tablet. All doorways have been closed except those to the vestibule and at the southeast. The doorway to the billiard room (present ladies' entrance hall) has been removed and filled in. The north wall casement opening on axis with the vestibule gives access to the service area and the modern, ground floor dining rooms.
- g. Heating: The east and west wall chimneys, with identical mantels, each have a green-veined, black marble hearth and a cast iron firebox with a cherub and spray back panel, and flambeau and spray sides. The plaster mantels, in the Louis XIV manner (4'-11" wide by 5'-8" high), each have a pulvinated bay leaf surround and an ogee frieze interrupted by a pink marble, central roundel with hood and scrolls. The shelf is divided into three sections: the cavetto ends supported decorative urns, the elevated center a classical bust.

East reception room: (painted light grey. The west mantel and the original brocatelle have been removed. Low partitioning divides the room into offices. [See FBJ Coll.]

- a. Flooring: common 2" hardwood, parquetry border.
- b. Baseboard: 6 1/2", wood with torus cap.
- c. Dado: raised panels in cyma moulding.
- d. Chairrail: wood, bead, fascia and block.
- e. Walls: applied fascia and cyma mouldings. Ionic pilasters with plain plinths, torus and astragal bases and decorative stop fluting flank the west wall chimney and east window. The pilasters divide the north and south walls into single bays flanked by pairs of smaller bays.
- f. Cornice: The full entablature has a narrow architrave of talon, a plain frieze, and an egg and dart, corona and talon cornice.
- g. Ceiling: 14'-0" high, plaster painted light grey.

- h. Doorways and doors: To the left of the west wall chimney is a door of raised panels in ovolo mouldings set within a raised panel jamb. The west bay of the north wall has a door of raised panels in ovolo mouldings within an ovolo architrave flanked by pilasters. Both doors are capped by an urn and rinceau plaster panel.
- i. Hardware: brass door handles with mortise lock escutcheons.
- j. Lighting: three-light sconces removed.
- k. Heating: The west wall, white marble chimney mantel has been removed. The semicircular-arched overmantel mirror within a bound bay leaf moulding is capped by a floral wreath with floral swags attached to acanthus spandrels. Flanking the mirror are floral panels.

West reception room: (present ladies' lounge: no longer accessible from entrance hall.)

- a. Flooring: carpeted.
- b. Baseboard: 3 1/2", wood.
- c. Dado: The rosette-indented, raised panels are natural wood with gilded mouldings and additional painted graining.
- d. Chairrail: 2'-11" high, wood with beading.
- e. Walls: gold silk over padding. The east chimney wall breaks forward.
- f. Cornice: The full entablature has a talon architrave, a gilded rinceau frieze on a grey ground, and an egg and dart cornice.
- g. Ceiling: The plaster ceiling is divided into three linear bays by shallow beams with bead and talon mouldings. Each panel is centered by a decorative plaster moulding in the late 18th century manner.
- h. Doorways and doors: The permanently closed, wood, single door (southeast) to the entrance hall has a gilded guilloche lock rail. This door and the casement opening to the former billiard room each have a fascia and gilded cyma architrave capped by a panel of gilded wreath, flambeau and sprays with scroll terminals, and a cyma, corona and talon cornice.
- i. Hardware: brass, rocaille door handle (southeast) and panelled mortise lock escutcheon.

- j. Lighting: There are six, two-light, ribbon and tassel, brass sconces with scrolled flambeau arms.
- k. Heating: The east wall chimney has a green-veined, black marble hearth with white rectangular insets and a cast iron lattice firebox with classical frieze surround. The green-veined, black marble mantel (4'-5" wide by 3'-7" high) has flanking consoles with brass leaf caps, a frieze centered by an oval brass panel and broken back over either console, and a cavetto shelf. The crossette frame of the beveled overmantel mirror has brass swags and a wood tablet cap with brass keystone and sprays.

Billiard room: (painted white. Now the ladies' entrance hall. Remodeled to accomodate present function. Doorway to main entrance hall is closed and new passage opened at northeast.)

- a. Flooring: basket weave parquetry.
- b. Baseboard: 7", wood with cyma cap.
- c. Chairrail: 2'-7 1/2" high, leafy pulvination.
- d. Walls: plaster with applied mouldings of bound "bachelor-buttons."
- e. Cornice: egg and dart, fascia, tassel, astragal, talon, corona and talon.
- f. Ceiling: The plaster ceiling is divided into three bays of north to south beams edged by a palmette talon moulding.
- g. Doorways and doors: The 8'-0" high doorway openings at the northeast, northwest and south are flanked by panelled Tuscan pilasters capped by an entablature broken forward over either pilaster. The west entrance, post and lintel archway has paired Tuscan pilasters capped by acanthus consoles which support paired beams.
- h. Lighting: Flanking the south doorway are two-light, brass cornucopia sconces.
- i. Heating: The north wall chimney has a white marble hearth, and a cast iron firebox with an escutcheon back panel and fleur-de-lis surround. The white marble mantel (5'-11" wide by 5'-11" high) has panelled pedestals with fluted acanthus consoles capped by acanthus scrolls which support a guilloche moulding, a griffin, cherub and wreath frieze, and an egg and dart, dentil and cyma shelf.

Stairway:

Within the main entrance hall, the stair ascends eight risers (7" high) north to the first landing and seven-teen risers west to the [second] floor. The stringer soffit panel of plaster is rosette-indented. The risers and treads are limestone. The cast iron railing of wreath, flambeau and spray terminates at the base in a scroll and at the [second] floor in a panelled marble newel, tapered at the base and supporting a bronze of the "Four Muses" in turn capped by a single, six-light, brass candelabrum. The stair continues to the [third] and [fourth] floors.

[Second-floor] reception room: (painted pale blue with grey trim. Mid 18th century Germanic manner. The decorative panels over the doors and the east mirror, the allegorical scenes in the ceiling cove and the run-plaster work (except over the mantel, the mirror, the south window and at the ceiling corners) have been removed. [See FBJ Coll.]

- a. Flooring: herringbone parquetry.
- b. Baseboard: 6 1/2", wood with ovolo cap.
- c. Dado: wood panels formed by applied cyma moulding.
- d. Chairrail: 3'-0" high, wood ovolo.
- e. Walls: painted panels of bucolic scenes in rocaille ovolo mouldings. The east wall breaks forward slightly for a chairrail to cornice mirror.
- f. Cornice: plaster, with a fascia and enriched lip architrave and a decorative rocaille cove terminated by a pulvinated moulding.
- g. Ceiling: 14'-9" high, plaster painted white.
- h. Doorways and doors: The rocaille mirror-paned, double doors flanking the west chimney wall to the ballroom are permanently closed. The doors have been brought forward flush with the wall. Each doorway, capped by a three-point-arched panel, has a bolection architrave and floral escutcheon key with rocaille sprays.

- i. Windows: Interrupting the baseboard, the floor length window has a three-point-arched, ovolo architrave, recessed for drapes.
- j. Lighting: There are six, five-light, brass, rocaille sconces.
- k. Heating: The west wall chimney has a white, grey and tan-veined marble hearth with grey rectangular insets, and a cast iron firebox with a cherub and flambeau back panel, lattice sides and a concave, rinceau surround. The rocaille, cream marble mantel (5'-7" wide by 4'-0" high) has a curvilinear architrave, centered by a gilded shell and flanked by splayed consoles with gilded caps. The bundled ogee overmantel moulding originally contained a Sargent portrait capped by a mask-centered rocaille panel with floral swags and pendants.

Anteroom to library: (The original brocatelle has been replaced by pale blue rosette-indented panels in gilded talon mouldings on a raised ground. The pulvinated guilloche frieze has been replaced by a flat rinceau frieze. The swags joining the semicircular arch spandrels and the keystone of the overmantel mirror have been removed. The bound acanthus leaf doorway architraves have been replaced by a egg and dart crossette moulding. The overdoor crescent-shaped rocaille canvasses and frames have been replaced by tablets with end scrolls and rectangular canvasses in plain frames. [See FBJ Coll.]

- a. Flooring: herringbone parquetry.
- b. Baseboard: 6 1/2", wood with ovolo cap.
- c. Dado: flat wood panels in ovolo moulding.
- d. Chairrail: 2'-7" high, wood ovolo.
- e. Walls: plaster with applied panel mouldings, painted. The north wall chimney breaks forward.
- f. Cornice: The full entablature has a fascia architrave with astragal and gadroon, a rinceau frieze and an egg and dart, corona and talon cornice.
- g. Ceiling: 14'-9" high, plaster painted white with bundled reed border.

- h. Doorways and doors: The east and west wall single casement openings (8'-9" high) each have an egg and dart, crossette architrave capped by a spray frieze with scroll terminals and a bucolic panel canvas. (A northwest doorway with a similar architrave has been closed to the stair hall.)
 - i. Windows: Interrupting the baseboard, the floor length windows each have a three-point arch with leaf and spray apandrels and a pulvinated bay leaf architrave, recessed for drapes.
 - j. Lighting: There are six, five-light, brass sconces, each with flambeau base and reeded, volute arms.
 - k. Heating: The north wall chimney has a white marble hearth with grey rectangular insets, and a cast iron firebox with an allegorical rocaille back panel, lattice sides and a concave rocaille surround. The white marble mantel (5'-9" wide by 4'-1" high) has flanking columns tapered toward the base, with decorative stop fluting and arrow shaft brass capitals which support a rocaille frieze of ribbon, bow and vine, brass applique, broken forward as rosettes over either column. The overmantel mirror is capped by a gilded, semicircular-arched putti panel and framed within decorative pulvination broken by a gilded, scrolled keystone. The chimney mantel and mirror are flanked by gilded ribbon, spray and floral pendant panels.
- Library: (The plain ground of the chairrail and the original acanthus leaf bookcase caps have been replaced by gadrooning. The decorative platform over the central sections have been removed. The original brocatelle has been replaced by wood panels. The carved library table is now in the ballroom. The window at the right of the chimney has been replaced by a door. The north wall wood mantel of male terms, marquetry frieze, segmental back panel and flanking composite pilasters has been replaced. [See photos in FBJ Coll.])
- a. Flooring: basket weave parquetry.
 - b. Baseboard: 6", ovolo cap.
 - c. Bookcase: built-in and broken forward from the walls. The central section of the east, west and south wall bookcases are separated by panelled, composite pilasters from the lower (5'-9" high), flanking bays which are capped by a gadrooned moulding.
 - d. Walls: panels formed by applied cyma mouldings.

- e. Cornice: The fascia cornice has dentil, astragal and egg and dart mouldings of plaster painted to simulate wood.
- f. Ceiling: 14'-9" high, plaster. The ceiling has geometric rinceau panels, painted white and separated by wood beams with plaster crossing bosses and talon edging, painted to simulate wood.
- g. Doorways and doors: The 8'-9" high doorway openings to the anteroom and the conservatory, and the door at the west of the north wall mantle (the doors replaced by bookshelves), are capped by a decorative escutcheon panel and encased in a floor to cornice ovolo architrave.
- h. Windows: Interrupting the baseboard, the floor length windows each have an ovolo architrave, recessed for drapes, with a three-point arch and flambeau spandrels.
- i. Hardware: brass door handles with lattice escutcheon.
- j. Lighting: The four-light sconces have been removed.
- k. Heating: (original mantel replaced by following) The north wall chimney has a grey marble hearth and a cast iron firebox with an allegorical back panel, fleur-de-lis side panels and a concave strapwork surround. The plaster mantel in the 16th century manner is 10'-0" wide by 6'-5" high. It has flanking plinths and cluster columns with decorative shafts which support a fascia architrave, a wreath and rinceau frieze, and an egg and dart, corona and cyma shelf. The overmantel, an additional 5'-4" high, is terminated at the ends by candelabra pilasters with cherub capitals. Between the pilasters are two roundel panels centered by dragons, separated by decorative flambeau and capped by a shell and cherub frieze, and a talon, astragal, dentil and talon cornice. (Photographs in the possession of the Cosmos Club indicate this mantel to be a plaster copy of the original found at the Chateau de Blois.)

Reception hall: (natural oak. Divided into three linear bays by beams and pilasters broken forward from the south wall. The central south wall bay originally opened over the main stair. The space between the pilasters and balustrade has been filled in.)

- a. Flooring: basket weave parquetry.
- b. Baseboard: 7 1/2", quarter-round cap.
- c. Dado: panels formed by cyma moulding.

- d. Chairrail: 3'-4" high, cyma.
- e. Walls: The dado and similar wall panels are separated by floor to cornice, fluted Corinthian pilasters (the plaster capitals painted to simulate wood.)
- f. Cornice: The full entablature has an egg and dart architrave, a plain frieze interrupted by paired brackets, and a corona and talon cornice. This extends across the ceiling beams. The mouldings are plaster, painted to simulate wood.
- g. Ceiling: 14'-9" high, plaster painted white with pulvinated border moulding and a leafy fixture rosette centered in each bay.
- h. Doorways and doors: The two doors in either end bay and those flanking the north wall chimney each have a bolection architrave with a cyma reversa, corona and cyma cornice, capped by a panel centered with a decorative roundel plaque and sprays.
- i. Lighting: Each bay has a nine-light, single tier, gilded plaster, rocaille chandelier with grape pendant.
- j. Heating: The north wall chimney has a white-veined, purple marble hearth with grey rectangular insets, and a cast iron firebox with a concave gouge surround. The white-veined, purple marble mantel in the manner of Louis XIV is 6'-11" wide by 5'-10" high. It has an ovolo architrave flanked by consoles each capped by a brass acanthus leaf and swags. The consoles support an inverted cyma frieze, centered by a brass rocaille mask with sprays, and terminated by brass acanthus leaves. The shelf is of cyma and corona.

Dining room: (original brocatelle panels replaced by wood.
Plaster mouldings painted to simulate wood.)
[See FBJ Coll.]

- a. Flooring: basket weave parquetry.
- b. Baseboard: 6", wood with quarter-round cap.
- c. Dado: raised wood panels in cyma moulding.
- d. Chairrail: 3'-4 1/2" high, wood ovolo.
- e. Buffet: The south wall maroon and white marble buffet (8'-4" wide by 3'-6" high) has paired consoles with brass lion mask applique which support the serving counter. The marble splash board, an additional 3'-1" high, has scroll terminals and a centered brass mask and leaf cap.

- f. Walls: flush panels in ovolo moulding with rocaille corners. The west alcove is separated from the main space by a screen of two pairs of composite columns and pilasters all with decorative stop fluting. The north chimney, the south buffet and the openings within the main space are flanked by similar composite pilasters.
- g. Cornice: The full entablature has a talon, astragal and egg and leaf architrave, a plain frieze, and an ovolo, astragal, corona, shell talon and fascia cornice.
- h. Ceiling: The west alcove columns have acanthus modillions which support panelled beams. The beams divide the main ceiling into three bays of frescoed plaster panels. The cornice is carried around each bay.
- i. Doorways and doors: The 9'-0" high openings each have a decorative, three-point arch frieze and bolection architrave.
- j. Hardware: The brass, baroque door handles have mortise lock lattice escutcheons, two inches wide by 1'-8" high.
- k. Lighting: There are twelve, five-light, brass, baroque sconces each with a term, swag and mask base from which the arms spring.
- l. Heating: Above the north wall door within the alcove, is a heating duct covered by a lattice grille centered with duck, leaf and ribbon, bronze applique (a wood panel above the opposing wall door is centered by a similar decorative motif).

The north wall chimney has a maroon marble hearth with black rectangular insets, and a cast iron firebox with an allegorical rocaille back panel, lattice sides, and a decorative concave surround. The white-veined, maroon marble mantel (7'-11" wide by 5'-0" high) has an ovolo architrave and flanking, panelled pilaster piers, capped by consoles which support a pulvinated frieze and an ovolo, corona and ovolo shelf. (The photograph [FBJ Coll.] shows brass applique which has been removed.)

Ballroom: (painted soft grey with gilding. The double doors to the reception room have been replaced by lighted cabinets. The chandeliers have been removed. [See FBJ Coll.]

- a. Flooring: basket weave parquetry.
- b. Baseboard: 6 1/4", wood with quarter-round cap.
- c. Dado: raised, corner-indented, wood panels in ovolo moulding.

- d. Chairrail: 3'-3 1/2" high, wood ovolo.
- e. Walls: Above the chairrail are rocaille panels which alternate between semicircular-arched openings and mirrors. At the arch impost block, the walls are divided by a fascia and ovolo course, interrupted above each panel by gilded rocaille urns, the floral sprays and clusters centered in an additional line of rocaille panels. Above the chairrail the semicircular-arched mirrors each have gilded applique and a floor to cornice fascia and bolection architrave with a gilded escutcheon and ribbon cap. Composite pilasters with decorative stop fluting, frame the central musicians' alcove which breaks back from the north wall.
- f. Cornice: The egg-and-dart architrave and panel frieze is interrupted by elaborate, paired scrolls over the musicians' alcove pilasters. Above the frieze are astragal, cavetto and pulvinated mouldings capped by a decorative rocaille cove. Within the cove and centered above each wall, is a lunette flanked by dragons. At the ceiling corners similar devices are flanked by putti. The cove is terminated by bound leaf pulvination.
- g. Ceiling: plaster. A border of applied mouldings surrounds three recessed ceiling bays. The north and south bays each have an elliptical rocaille panel edged by a roll moulding and bordered by lattice spandrels. The center bay of bundled-reed and pulvination supported by a bracketed cove centered with lunettes and masks, frames a round allegorical canvas which has a pulvinated surround and lattice spandrels.
- h. Doorways and doors: The doors and either panel flanking the musicians' alcove, have semicircular arches with rose tinted paintings in rocaille lunettes. The doorways and windows have fascia and bolection architraves with gilded escutcheons and ribbon caps.
- i. Hardware: brass rocaille window cranks and knobs.
- j. Lighting: There are twelve, five-light, crystal pendant and bead, brass sconces with reeded rocaille arms.

D. Site:

- 1. Setting and orientation: The building faces south on Massachusetts Avenue within an angular lot measuring 358'-7" at the south; 147'-4" at the west (intersection of Massachusetts Avenue, Florida Avenue and 22nd Street); 232'-7" at the north (alley); and 170'-3" at the east.

2. Enclosures: Flanking either wing and broken forward so as to line the rear of the semielliptical driveway, are rusticated and stepped, limestone garden walls, each stepped segment centered by a raised panel. Mask and griffin vases terminate the walls at the driveway entrances. Lining the front of the drive is an oval guilloche, limestone balustrade terminated by scrolls. At the west, the property is enclosed by a retaining wall which supports an 8'-0" high decorative wrought iron fence.
3. Outbuildings: The rectangular, brick carriage house at the northwest (presently the auditorium at 2170 Florida Avenue) retains its 4'-0" high random ashlar granite base and ten inch limestone water table. The original slate mansard roof has been removed and replaced by a full-height, second story.
4. Walks: Granite curbing lines the semielliptical entrance driveway and public sidewalk. Six granite risers flanked by oval guilloche and scroll, limestone balustrades on granite bases are on axis with the entrance door from Massachusetts Avenue. The original configuration of the west garden walks has been altered.
5. Landscaping: Though correspondence between Mrs. Townsend and the Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts, is extant, it is not known how much of the original landscaping (if anything) was designed by that firm. In 1952, the remodeling architect, Horace Peaslee, was forced to destroy part of the grounds for the club additions and parking facilities. The present plantings include azalea, juniper, elm, wisteria, dogwood and magnolia.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This document was prepared from records donated to the Historic American Buildings Survey by the Commission of Fine Arts, 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C., and representing studies of prime, typical, diversified and sumptuous architecture erected primarily between the years 1890 and 1930, when American society and architecture were greatly influenced by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. The material, originally organized for adaptation to the Historic American Buildings Survey format, was first published in Massachusetts Avenue Architecture, Vol. 1, 1973, issued by the Commission of Fine Arts, Charles H. Atherson, Secretary; Donald B. Myer, Assistant Secretary; Jeffrey R. Carson, Architectural Historian; Lynda L. Smith, Historian; and J. L. Sibley Jennings, Jr., Architect. Photographs were made for the Commission by Jack E. Boucher, Linwood, New Jersey; J. Alexander, Wheaton, Maryland; and the Commission of Fine Arts Staff. The material, donated December 1973, was coordinated for the HABS documentation in 1978 by Lucy Pope Wheeler, HABS Writer/Editor.

Documentation of this property could not have been achieved without the cooperation of organizations and people concerned with the Commission's study--The Cosmos Club, Mr. George Crossette, member and historian for the Cosmos Club, and Mr. E. Bunthar Skole, former Club manager.